

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



FACULTY ARTISTS SERIES

WALTER HALL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1979

8 P.M.

This concert will be broadcast by CBC at the following times:
Mostly Music, CBC Stereo, 94.1 FM, 11.35 am - 1 pm; and CBC
Radio 740 AM at 10.35 pm - 12 midnight on October 12, 1979.

PROGRAM

Trio in Eb major, K.498

W. A. MOZART

Andante

Menuetto

Rondo: Allegretto

STANLEY McCARTNEY, clarinet; RIVKA GOLANI-ERDESZ, viola;
JANE COOP, piano

Each of the works on tonight's program reflects an innovative approach to chamber music instrumentation. In the case of the Clarinet Trio, this innovation was directly related to Mozart's warm relationship with the clarinetist Anton Stadler and the pianist Francesca von Jacquin. Stadler's prominent role in Mozart's career is well known. His virtuosity was responsible not only for the inclusion of the clarinet here, but also for the composition of the Clarinet Quintet, K. 581, and the Clarinet Concerto, K. 622. The Baroness von Jacquin, whose family had long been on friendly terms with Mozart, and for whom the trio seems primarily to have been written, was a gifted pupil of the composer's. Needless to say, the viola part was intended for Mozart himself.

From a strictly commercial point of view, Mozart's decision to write for this unusual ensemble was perhaps somewhat ill-advised. It is an interesting fact that, in order to offset the possibility of poor sales engendered by the use of the clarinet, the title page of the first edition (1788) was made to read: "Trio for Harpsichord or Piano accompanied by Violin and Viola... The Violin part may also be played on a Clarinet." This misrepresentation reflected the normal arrangement for the piano trio, and the normal expectations of the trio playing public.

Sonate

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Pastorale

Interlude

Finale

JEANNE BAXTRESSER, flute; RIVKA GOLANI-ERDESZ, viola;
JUDY LOMAN, harp

In contrast to the Clarinet Trio, Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp shows only an indirect, or reactive, relationship with external events. It was composed during the summer of 1915, at a time when, depressed and emotionally drained by the continuing ravages of the war and by the steady progress of the illness that was shortly to end his life, Debussy was able to escape from the "open jail" of Paris to a quiet cottage in Pourville. Following a period of almost a year during which he had composed practically nothing, the short time he spent at Pourville witnessed a tremendous creative surge. En Blanc et Noir, the Twelve Studies, the Cello Sonata, and the work on tonight's program were all substantially composed during the summer months. A comment of Debussy's might suggest an interpretation of this output as an act of "intellectual resistance" to German domination but, in the musical sense, Debussy had been involved in such an act since the 1890's. In a letter of August 1915, he writes: "I want to work not so much for myself, but to give proof, however small it may be, that even if there were thirty million Boches (i.e. on French soil), French thought will not be destroyed."

The Sonata is the second of a projected set of six such works for various instrumental combinations. Debussy lived long enough to complete only the third of the set, for violin and piano. The fourth and fifth sonatas were to call for oboe, horn, and harpsichord, and trumpet, clarinet, and bassoon respectively. The sixth was evidently intended as a high point of the set, and was meant to include all of the instruments used thus far, plus a double bass. The Sonatas were Debussy's first full scale chamber works since the Quartet of 1893. More than one critic has commented on the unprecedented production of such works as the Études and the Sonatas as indicative of a move away from literary association which otherwise played such a prominent role in Debussy's work. The Sonatas clearly reflect a preoccupation with the subtleties of instrumental combination and with the restrictions posed by reference to traditional forms. The Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp offers ample evidence of Debussy's remarkable inventiveness in the area of instrumental colour and sonority, and of his success in putting this inventiveness at the service of formal clarity.

INTERMISSION

L'Histoire du Soldat (Concert version)

IGOR STRAVINSKY

March of the Soldier; Music of the 1st Scene;
Music of the 2nd Scene; Royal March; Little Concert;
Three Dances; Tango, Waltz, Ragtime; Dance of the Devil;
Grand Chorale; Triumphal March of the Devil.

STANLEY McCARTNEY, clarinet; DAVID CARROLL, bassoon;
STEPHEN CHENETTE, trumpet; FRANK HARMANTAS, trombone;
RUSSELL HARTENBERGER, percussion; DAVID ZAFER, violin;
THOMAS MONOHAN, double bass; VICTOR FELDBRILL, conductor.

With Stravinsky's Histoire, we return to a work whose genesis owes a great deal to the acceptance of external conditions. Stravinsky's main residence from 1914 to 1920 was Switzerland where, until 1917, he was receiving a certain amount of material support from Russia. The Revolution and the deprivations of the war brought his fortunes to a low ebb, and the possibility of producing a large scale work was eliminated. In 1917, Stravinsky and Charles Ramuz conceived the idea of a piece for a small travelling theatre, consisting of a narrator, two mime actors, a ballerina, and seven instrumentalists. Stravinsky's music was intended from the beginning to be performable as an independent suite. The narrative concerns a soldier who deserts, and is carried off, Faust-like, by the Devil. Redemption comes in the form of an enchanted princess, but the Devil nevertheless wins the day in the final scene.

The ensemble consists of a treble and bass member from each of the wind, brass, and string families, in addition to an extensive array of percussion instruments. Stravinsky recognized a certain indebtedness to jazz in this work, and the sound often suggests something of a ragtime band. At the same time, the choice of instruments reflects a desire on the composer's part to make available as heterogeneous a timbre as possible, so that the individual instrumental roles remain very clear. This deliberate lack of overall blend, which some see as related to the "split sonority" or "Spaltklang" of medieval and early renaissance music, is reinforced by the frequent use of the instruments in inconvenient registers.

Notes by Art Levine

NEXT CONCERT: U. of T. Orchestra, October 13, 8 pm, MacMillan Theatre

NEXT FACULTY ARTISTS CONCERT: November 3, 1979, at 8 pm, Walter Hall.